

Jan: 3
*The Duty of serving one another in Love
opened and inforced,*

I N A
S E R M O N

PREACHED AT
LITTLE-BADDOW in ESSEX,

At the SEPARATION of
The Reverend Mr EVAN JONES,
To the Office of a PASTOR in that Place,
SEPTEMBER 20, 1764.

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Si non vultis in istâ eremo siti mori, bibite caritatem. Fons est quem voluit Deus ponere, ne deficiamus; et abundantius eum bibemus, cum ad Patriam venerimus.

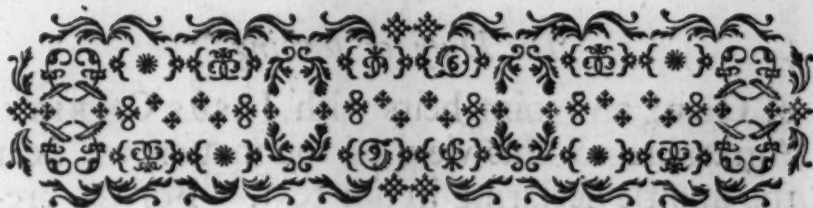
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GALATIANS V. 13.

— But by love serve one another.

The whole verse stands thus,

For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.

VARIOUS and eminent are the privileges and blessings which christians enjoy under the dispensation of the gospel, the last and full edition of the divine will and mercy to the children of men; but, though the gospel is the kindest friend to the sinner, it is by no means in any respect the patron of sin; and all the grace it publishes and displays to us, is not intended to lead us from God, and dissolve our obligations of obedience to him; but, on the contrary, its manifest and ultimate design is to bring us to God, and mould us into a conformity to his holy nature and laws; not indeed in the servile awe and hard bondage of slaves, but in the liberty and joys of children, the heirs

of GOD, and joint-heirs with JESUS CHRIST. Agreeable to this view of the matter we hear the apostle declaring in our text, "For ye, brethren, have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another." "Ye have been called unto liberty"; either by a deliverance from the Mosaic rites and ceremonies, which were a very heavy and painful yoke; or by a discharge from the law, as a covenant of works; and consequently as it is a violated law, a law that denounces wrath and vengeance against you. "Only use not liberty," adds the apostle, "for an occasion to the flesh"; that is, take heed that you rightly understand, and rightly improve this liberty, and let it not be abused as "an occasion to the flesh", as an occasion to gratify the propensions and lusts of corrupt and degenerate nature in yourselves, or as an occasion to tempt or in any way embolden others to indulge themselves in any of the pollutions of the flesh: but, on the other hand, "by love serve one another"; that is, says the sagacious Dr *Guyse* on the place, "Let your liberty be improved unto all kind and brotherly affection, and friendly offices, in serving one another by all proper means, as those who are bound to seek each others edification and advantage."

In discoursing on the passage, "But by love serve one another", I shall,

- I. Enquire what may be intended by our serving one another.
- II. I shall consider in what manner we are to serve one another. And,
- III. And lastly, I shall point out some argument to this duty, "by love to serve one another".

I. I shall enquire what may be intended by our serving one another. We are in this world as one great family; and as members of it we are to succour and help one another; not accounting ourselves as born for ourselves, or situated here only for ourselves, but as born into the world, and placed in it, that we may be mutual blessings. The persons most remote from us in country, and the most unlike us in complexion, custom, and religion, are to be esteemed by us as our brethren; and whatever we can do in prudence, as opportunity presents itself, for their service, that we are readily to perform on their behalf; and we should take a pleasure in doing good to all men, to all the sons and daughters of *Adam*, as we are no other than parts of the same great family, however distinguished we may be from one another in smaller respects. A participation of the same nature, a descent from one father, are just reasons for the circulations of mutual friendship and benevolence; and there is not a man upon earth who is not our brother, and whom we ought not

not accordingly to regard and love. But as to the saints of God, the disciples of CHRIST, and the members of his church, they are related to one another in nearer bonds. They are not only the children of the same God by creation, but they are his children by a divine renewal, and a most gracious adoption; and therefore they should more especially be concerned to assist and bless one another, according as our apostle speaks in the next chapter to that of our text: "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith (a)". Christians are a family within a family; and the people of God have not only claims upon us in common with the rest of mankind, but they have claims peculiar to themselves; and therefore, while our goodness diffuses itself among our whole species, its beams are directly and more powerfully to descend upon them. "We are to serve one another", to perform for one another all the good offices we can, and even such offices as may seem mean and unworthy, when we have a proper call to them, are to be as readily submitted to by us as those which may not carry in them any remarkable condescension, though they may be beneficial discoveries of our goodwill to our christian brethren. Our lives are not to be spent for ourselves; our talents are not to be unprofitably hoarded up or wantonly lavished upon ourselves, but all that we are and

(a) Gal. vi. 10.

and all that we have are to be consecrated to the glory of GOD, and the happiness of our fellow-creatures, and especially our fellow-saints. Not only are we to take heed that we are not nuisances and plagues in the world, scattering mischief and destruction around us ; but we are not to suffer ourselves to be idle drones in the hive of mankind ; and nothing less should content us, for nothing less is our duty, than actively and substantially to serve one another. We are eagerly to embrace every occasion of doing good, whether it be to the bodies or to the souls, to the temporal or the eternal interests of our neighbours. We should according to our abilities feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the sick, comfort the afflicted, be eyes to the blind, be feet to the lame, be guides and guardians to the young, and a staff and shelter to the old. We are to break the darts of reproach and slander, to fly to the help of injured innocence, to rescue the oppressed, and as tenderly treat and, as far as we can, protect the character and reputation of others as we would our own. And above all, as to the souls of men, we are to tender them all the service in our power. We are to pray for all mankind, to beseech in compassion to our fellow-sinners, and our fellow-immortals, " that the kingdom of GOD may come, and that his will " may be done on earth as it is in heaven (b) " ; and we are to propagate and extend the Redeemer's

(b) Matt. vi. 10.

deemer's interest, in which not only the divine honour, but the happiness of the world is so essentially concerned, to the utmost of our power. "We are to be the salt of the earth (c)", and should spread the savour of godliness amidst the general corruption of human nature. "We should be lights in the world", and so shine in it as that all who behold us may thence be excited "to glorify our Father which is in heaven (d)". And as to the churches of CHRIST, there are we more especially to exert ourselves; and never to be weary in doing good to them, as far as our ability and opportunities will give leave. If we are Pastors and Ministers, we are to administer the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper; to preach the Word in season and out of season; to reprove, rebuke, and exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine; and to approve ourselves living epistles of JESUS CHRIST known and read of all men; summing up and inculcating in our lives what we recommend and urge upon others in our discourses, and thereby giving a vigour and force to holiness, without which all our most beautiful delineations of religion may be expected to be vain, and perhaps worse than vain. If we are deacons in the churches of CHRIST, let us take care of the table of the LORD, the table of the Minister, and the table of the Poor, and behave ourselves with all prudence and affection, fidelity and honour; considering ourselves not unlike officers

(c) Matt. v. 13.

(d) Matt. v. 14—16.

officers in an army, who are more especially bound to set a good example to their brother soldiers. Or are we only members in general of the churches, let us, as constantly as we can, fill up our places, and show that we love the ordinances of God's house; let us exhort and provoke one another to love, and to good works, and be always ready by word and deed to encourage and assist our minister and our fellow-members; and particularly let us be importunate and incessant in our prayers for our minister, that he may come forth from time to time "in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel" of JESUS CHRIST (e)", and that "the word of" God may have free course, and be glorified (f)"; and for our fellow-members, that "they may be" built up on their most holy faith (g), and may "walk worthy of the LORD unto all pleasing, "being fruitful in every good work (h)". Did an heathen emperor at the end of a day, in which he had bestowed no favour, express his regret, by saying, "My friends, I have lost a "day *!" how much more worthy is such a sigh from the heart of a christian! or rather, how vigilant should he be so to crowd every revolving day with devotions to his God, and acts of kindness towards man, as that he may not have so much as one day, even for whole years

B together,

(e) Rom. xv. 29.

(f) 2 Theff. iii. 1.

(g) Jude 20.

(h) Coloss. i. 10.

* Atque etiam recordatus quondam super cœnam, quod nihil cuiquam toto die præstitisset, memorabilem illam meritoque laudat un vocem edidit; AMICI DIEM PERDIDI. Suetonius lib. 8. cap. 8.

together, over which to lament upon its review, as an empty cypher and blank in duration? Let us with an unwearied diligence and inextinguishable ardor serve God and our generation, not measuring our existence by the succession of days, and months, and years, but by the succession of duties following each other, in such an orderly and uninterrupted train, as not to suffer even the fragments, the smallest particles of our time to be lost. While "we live, let us live"; live for God, and for one another. Can we do good, can we but have an opportunity, a prospect of doing good, let us seize it while the happy moment is on the wing, and let the sphere of our influence and activity be a sphere of benevolence and blessing; that "the ear that hears us", as in the case of *Job*, "may bless us; that the eye that sees us" may give witness unto us; and that the blessing of him who is ready to perish may come upon us (i)". Happy, happy societies of christians where there is a mutual circulation of kindnesses, each one giving, and each one receiving benefit! Thus in a long-extended chain the links mutually support and are supported; and thus in a brave and united army each soldier both assists and is assisted, and all concur in mutual defence, and in the conflict with the enemy, and in the end jointly share the salvation and glories of the day. Having shewn what may be intended by serving one another, I come, II. To

(i). *Job* xxix. 11—13.

II. To consider in what manner we are to serve one another. "But by love", says the apostle, "serve one another". Services are required of us, and services to one another; but from what springs are these services to flow, or in what manner are our reciprocal kindnesses to be conducted? Are we to serve one another from selfish motives, or because we look for a recompence again? "If ye love them", says our LORD, "which love you, what reward have you? Do not even the publicans the same (k)?" We may indeed in some instances serve one another, hoping that we may be served again by our fellow-creatures or our fellow-christians; but yet we are to be influenced by higher considerations, and in some cases we are absolutely to look beyond all advantage to ourselves, and all expectations of a return from the objects or recipients of our favour: according to what our LORD speaks; "And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same. And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind to the unthankful and to the evil. Be ye therefore merciful, as

B 2

"your

(k) Luke vi. 32.

" your Father also is merciful (*l*)". Or are we to serve one another in order to raise ourselves a good esteem and high reputation among mankind, and particularly among our fellow-christians? No, my friends, superior motives than these are to be the principles of our services to each other; for the apostle well observes, that " though we should bestow all our goods to feed the poor, and have not charity", as the root of our beneficence, that is, love to God, and love to men, " it will profit us nothing (*m*)". Though our kindnesses to others will not, and indeed cannot in their own nature be concealed; and though a fair and public renown may be the consequence of many worthy and bountiful actions to others, yet we are not to be governed in our services to one another from the honours that may possibly or probably result from them; for this would be only setting up ourselves as our idols, and then " sacrificing to our own net, and burning incense to our own drag (*n*)"; and we might be truly said, when the incense of praise is offered us for our bounties and liberalities, if we have no better considerations to animate us, to have received our reward. From what arguments then are we to serve one another? The answer is *by* or *from* * love we are to serve one another;

(*l*) Luke vi. 33—36.

(*m*) 1 Cor. xiii. 3.

(*n*) Hab. i. 16.

* *Δια της αγαπης*, &c. *Δια* cum genitivo per, à, ex significat. Constantin: in Præposit. There may be some distinction of sense according as we render the passage *by* or *from* love serving one another;

another; that is, we are to serve one another with a cordial undissembled good-will, a propension of kindness, a true fraternal esteem and regard for each other. This love, a love of this disinterested, generous kind, is to be the inward spring of our good offices, and it is to mingle itself, as a sweet perfume, in all the performances of kindness to one another. If we give to the necessities of others, we are to give from love, from sympathy and compassion to them. If we admonish, exhort, or pray for others, we are to do it in the tender affection of our hearts to them. And in like manner every other service we perform to our neighbour, whether it respects their bodies or their souls, their temporal or their future interests, is to grow from the root of love. And as our services are to grow from the root of love, so let them also be enriched and increased, may I so speak, with the odours of love. Let us show the love we bear in our hearts to our brethren, whether as
men

other; though nearly the same meaning may result in both cases. If we read our text *by* love serving one another, then we may consider love as the medium through which all our reciprocal services are to pass; or if we translate the words *from* love serving one another, as the preposition will undoubtedly allow us, we then conceive of love as the origin of our mutual good services. But whether we serve one another *by* love as the medium, or *from* love as the origin, certain it is that love will have a prevailing and universal influence into our good offices to one another. In the first case, we may regard it as acting like a rich and strong perfume, and so diffusing its most grateful odours into our acts of service to one another; and in the other, we may view it as a full and free fountain that supplies all those streams of blessings with which we are serving our christian brethren. I have adopted both these senses in my explanation.

men or christians, in the very manner in which we perform our acts of bounty and favour to them. A kindness becomes a double kindness by the graceful and tender manner in which it is conferred. The readiness, the compassion, the pleasure, the ardency with which we do good, abundantly improve and heighten it; and as love produces, so love relishes the gift. *By or from* this love let us serve one another; this love opposed to the expectations of returns of love again, and this love as opposed to a selfish vain-glory, that only seeks occasions to pride by our liberality and favour to others. Having briefly considered in what manner we "are to serve one another", I come,

III. And lastly, To point out some arguments to this duty, *by or from* "love to serve one another". And,

First, Consider the love of GOD and CHRIST, and the holy Spirit, to you, as an argument *by or from* "love to serve one another". What love was that in the great Father of all, the Father of mercies, and the GOD of all consolations, that he should appoint and send a Saviour for us, none less than his own Son, Emanuel, GOD with us! "For GOD so loved the world, as to give his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believes on him should not perish, but have everlasting life (o)". And again, "In this was manifested the love of GOD towards us,

(o) John iii. 16.

us, because that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God; but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins (p). And has God shown this love to us, this love, that lays the foundation of our comfortable hopes towards God both here and hereafter, and the song and triumph of heaven and eternity; then what is the inference, but that which the apostle draws, that "if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another". Love, free love, love to the unworthy, and love to the miserable, has been most abundantly displayed to us by the great and ever-blessed God in the gift and sacrifice of his Son; and we are to be influenced by this example (and can we imitate an higher or better?) to love one another; kindling our sparks, our lamps of beneficial and refreshing light, from the beams of that eternal sun that has shone out upon us, not in devouring flames of vengeance, but in the most reviving radiations of grace and blessing. The divine goodness has poured itself out in an immeasurable profusion in our world, and it rewards its own rich and generous acts of benevolence with the pleasure of doing good; what then is incumbent upon us, but to go and do likewise; and not from the views of recompences, or from adequate and proportioned returns, but from true disinterested beneficence to serve one another?

Again,

(p) 1 John iv. 9-11.

Again, Christians, consider the love of CHRIST towards you, and thence deduce your arguments "to serve one another in love. Ye know the " grace of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, that, " though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might " be made rich (q)". Need I tell you of his condescension, his readiness to take flesh, and tabernacle among us? Need I tell you of his humiliation in his birth, in his life, and above all in his death; and what rays of love and healing mercy shone from this sun of righteousness, from his first rising to his setting upon our world? Shall I ask wherefore he became incarnate, why he sojourned so long among us, or why he suffered and died upon a cross? Did he not come to spread light and joy over a dark and bewildered world? Did he not come to proclaim truth and grace, and to open the Father's counsels of mercy and salvation to poor perishing sinners? Did he not come to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself; come, to wash us from our sin in his own blood, and establish a new and everlasting covenant of life and blessedness for all that should believe upon and obey him? Did he not in his merits and mediation obtain for us pardon and acceptance with God, and open for us a new and living way from the horrors of eternal wrath and perdition, into the gates and glories of heaven; so that, as the apostle speaks, " where sin abounded,

" grace

(q) 2 Cor. viii. 9.

" grace did much more abound, and as sin
 " hath reigned unto death, even so did grace
 " reign through righteousness"; not meerly to
 the extinction of the curse due to sin, " but
 " unto eternal life, by JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD?"
 (r) And now shall not this love of CHRIST,
 whose heights reach to heaven, and at present
 raise our hopes, and will ere long raise our
 souls to the blessed regions above; whose depths
 rescue us from the pit of perdition, the belly of
 hell; whose breadths extend beyond all the
 numbers, and enormous magnitudes of our
 crimes; and whose lengths secure and convey
 glory and happiness for us through infinite du-
 ration, shall not this love of CHRIST engage
 us by love to serve one another? What, shall so
 much love be shewn by the head, and shall
 none be shewn by the members? Shall the love
 of CHRIST pass all understanding, and shall our
 love to one another not be understood at all?
 Surely, my friends, as CHRIST is, such are they
 who are CHRIST'S; and our Lord expects of us
 that we should be followers of him, and abound
 in love towards one another. " A new Com-
 " mandment, says he, I give unto you;" if it is
 not a new commandment in itself, yet it is a
 commandment that is given with a new motive,
 a motive derived from the example of our Lord
 himself; " that ye love one another: as I have
 " loved you; that ye also love one another." (s)
 In like manner, " This is my commandment,
 C " that

(r) Rom. v. 20, 21.

(s) Joh. xiii. 34.

"that ye love one another, as I have loved
 "you (*t*)". And when our LORD had washed his
 disciples feet he tells us what improvement
 we should make of that amazing instance of
 condescension; namely, that we should by love
 serve one another, even in the lowest offices of
 kindness, when there is a call for them; for it is
 said, "That after he had washed their feet,
 "and had taken his garments, and had sat
 "down again, he said unto them, Know ye
 "what I have done to you? ye call me Master
 "and Lord; and ye say well, for so I am. If I
 "then, your lord and master, have washed your
 "feet, ye ought also to wash one another's feet:
 "for I have given you an example, that ye
 "should do as I have done to you (*u*)". And
 shall we not find his apostles, under the influ-
 ences of the same Spirit, deriving our arguments
 to mutual love from the example of the amiable
 founder of our religion, the blessed JESUS? "Put
 "on therefore," says the apostle *Paul*, "as the
 "elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of
 "mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meek-
 "ness, long-suffering, forbearing one another,
 "and forgiving one another; even as CHRIST
 "forgave you, so also do ye (*w*)". And again;
 "and walk in love, as CHRIST also hath loved
 "us, and hath given himself for us, an of-
 "fering, and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-
 "smelling savour (*x*)". And the apostle *John*
 assumes a yet stronger strain, and carries our
 love,

(*t*) Joh. xv. 12.(*u*) Joh. xiii 12—15.(*w*) Col. iii. 12.(*x*) Eph. v. 2.

love, from the example of CHRIST, to the utmost limits; telling us, "that hereby we perceive the love of GOD, because he hath laid down his life for us, and that we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren (z)". So cogent and irresistible is the love of CHRIST to inkindle and inforce our love to one another.

Let me add, that the love of the holy Spirit towards us should influence us by love to serve one another. Consider the holy Spirit, in the oeconomy of our salvation, as applying to our souls the blessings of the Father's promise, and the Son's procurement; as opening blind eyes, as unstopping deaf ears, as melting obdurate hearts, as quickning dead souls, dead in the worst sense, dead in trespasses and sins. View him also as the holy and gracious resident and comforter of the people of GOD, who takes of the things of CHRIST, and reveals them to them, who witnesseth with our spirits that we are the children of GOD, and seals us unto the day of redemption; and then ask, whether all this love, this free love (for he is stiled the "Spirit of grace (a)") should not engage us to love, to comfort, and, in all the variety of kind and benevolent offices, to serve one another? Why should we not measure to others the same good measure that we have ourselves received; or at least, willingly impart fragments, when we have received immense blessings, and communicate our drops, when we have already

C 2

received

(z) 1 John iii. 18.

(a) Heb. x. 29.

received large draughts, and are looking for the immeasurable and everlasting fulness of joy?

In one word; we who are all-surrounded with the brightest and warmest emanations of blessing from Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, whose love, and grace, and communion we are so often imploring for one another, and in whom we find our present peace and consolation, and in whom we hope to find our eternal life and happiness, we, I say, should undoubtedly consider ourselves as excited and obliged from their love to serve one another by love; and, like gems or stars, having been irradiated with the beams of the most benign and surprising goodness, we should transmit them to others, and show forth the praises of that "God who hath called us out of darkness into his marvelous light *". Even dead earth, insensible and lifeless clay, will reflect the rays of the sun; and what shall not pardoned, enlivened, and sanctified souls reflect the radiations of love they have received, and diffuse abroad light and joy to all who are in any respect concerned and connected with them?

Secondly, Let us consider our very near and intimate relation as an argument why we should by love serve one another. We are in very near and intimate relation to one another, as the offspring of the same God, and as the descendants of the same general father and mother. "Of one blood, says the apostle, hath God made

* 1 Pet. ii. 9.

“made all nations of men, to dwell on the face
“of the earth (b)”. But as Christians we are
brought, as has been before observed, into still
closer and more endearing bonds: we are the
children of God by a double birth, that of na-
ture and that of grace; and we are children of
God by likeness, and by inheritance, being made
at once partakers of a divine nature, and being
adopted into his family. Add further, that
saints are represented in scripture as compacted
into one building, as framed into one body, as
branches of one vine, as belonging to the same
flock, and as constituting one church, of which
CHRIST is the head. And shall not such an
union as this, so strong and so intimate, be a
motive for Christians “by love to serve one
another?” Let it not be said, that the churches
of CHRIST are agitated by contentions, burn-
ing with resentment, and alienated from one
another in heart and affection, when they are
in name and profession, character and hope,
thus closely united. Let them not exhibit to
the world, to the disgrace, and I might say the
denial of their holy and heavenly relation to
one another, that “wisdom,” if so it may be
called, “which is earthly, sensual, and devilish,”
and which consists in “bitter envying, and
“strife in their hearts;” but let them be ra-
diant and unfulled mirrors of “that wisdom
“which is from above; which is first pure, then
“peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full
“of

(b) Acts xvii. 26.

" of mercy, and good fruits, without partiality,"
 " and without hypocrisy (c)." Let them remember the charges they have received: " Be kindly
 " affectioned one to another, with brotherly
 " love (d). Let brotherly love continue (e). " And again; " Seeing ye have purified your souls
 " in obeying the truth, through the Spirit, unto
 " unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye
 " love one another with a pure heart, fervently (f) ". Let kings and kingdoms contend
 with one another, and " the potsherds of the
 " earth strive together, " and be dashed in pieces by their mutual conflicts: or let one and
 the same nation be distracted and torn asunder
 by intestine animosities and quarrels; or let cities
 become the seats of uproar and discord; or
 let families rise up in rage and ruin against one
 another, parents against children, children against
 parents, brothers against sisters, and
 sisters against brothers: but let not Christians,
 persons in such near and intimate relation, the
 children of one Father, the brethren of one
 Lord Jesus, and the partakers of one holy and
 gracious Spirit, ever admit any strife, any contention
 among them, except who shall love and serve their
 God most, and love and serve one another best. Their
 divine union in their God should produce divine
 friendship to one another, and never suffer any flames
 to kindle among them but the flames of love; love, that
 rising

(c) James iii. 15—17.

(d) Rom. xii. 10.

(e) Heb. xiii. 1.

(f) 1 Pet. i. 22.

rising higher and higher towards heaven, and spreading wider and wider in all acts of kindness to one another, shall at once be their defence and their glory, and shall make the world cry out with admiration, "See how these Christians love one another!" Nothing can give a brighter and lovelier idea of Christianity than the spirit, and regular and constant exercises of mutual love. Thus shall the church "look forth as the morning, fair as the moon, and clear as the sun (g); and it shall appear to all that "the glory of the LORD has indeed arisen upon her (b)," by that glory that shines around her, and whose very lustres shall proclaim that they are from heaven, and therefore are heavenly.

Thirdly, Let us consider the pleasure and profit that we may expect to enjoy in christian worship and communion as another argument why "we should by love serve one another". Where there is a want of love, will there not be a want of peace; and where there is a want of peace, will there not be a want of pleasure; for what pleasure is there in animosities or hatred? or what happiness can that society enjoy that is risen up against itself, and is consuming in its own fires of discord and variance? Add further, what profit can be expected in that church whose members are falling out by the way; and who, instead of meeting together to promote and improve in communion with God, and the edifica-

(g) Cant. vi. 10.

(b) Isai. lx. 1.

edification and comfort of one another, meet together with anger and wrath, with evil jealousies and fierce heart-burnings, or at least in a deplorable dearth of cordial affection and friendship? Not in the storms and hurricanes of fierce, imperious, turbulent passions, but in the gentle balmy air of love, we may hope to see religion revive and flourish. The Spirit of God is represented as a dove; and sure I am, that those societies are not likely to enjoy his gracious visits and influences where the contrary dispositions to those of the dove prevail. I know that God alone can give success to the word, and that it is not in man, in the most eloquent or animated preacher, to renew and sanctify the soul; but, while the word is the seed, and salvation is of the LORD, yet love is the soil to receive the seed, and there only it is likely to take root and prosper; and as well might the Husbandman hope to reap a rich harvest from seed cast among thorns and briers, as a Minister to expect to do any great good, who from time to time dispenses the word to a people filled with bitter resentments, or a contemptuous scorn, or even cold neglect of him. It is love that is the herald and harbinger of success. It is this that, may I so speak, invites God to dwell among us, and to display himself in his grace and glories. "Be of one mind," says the apostle, "live in peace, and the God of love and peace shall be with you (i)".

"Behold,

(i) 2 Cor. xiii. 10.

“ Behold, says the Psalmist, how good and how
 “ pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together
 “ in unity. It is like the precious ointment
 “ upon the head, that ran down upon the
 “ beard, even Aaron’s beard, that went down
 “ to the skirts of his garments. As the dew of
 “ Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon
 “ the mountains of Zion; for there the LORD
 “ commanded the blessing, even life for ever-
 “ more (k). ”

Fourthly, Let us consider, as another argu-
 ment why we should serve one another by
 love, that hereby we give good evidence that
 we are true and sincere Christians. Hear what
 our LORD says on this matter: “ By this shall
 “ all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye
 “ have love one to another (l). ” In like man-
 ner, the Apostle John says, that “ we know that
 “ we have passed from death unto life, because
 “ we love the brethren (m). ” And again, the
 same inspired writer tells us, that “ if we love
 “ one another, GOD dwells in us, and his love
 “ is perfected in us (n). ” And once more, he
 declares that “ every one that loves him that
 “ begat, loves him also that is begotten of him.
 (o) ” And that this love is a love that is ac-
 tive and operative, not a love that consists in
 kind words, or a splendid show, but that takes
 root in the heart, and yields its correspondent

D

fruits

(k) Psalm cxxxiii.

(l) John xiii. 35.

(m) 1 John iii. 14.

(n) 1 John iv. 12.

(o) 1 John v. 1.

fruits of real good, and substantial blessing to our fellow-saints, is evident from what the same Apostle says, when he tells us, that "who-
 " so hath this world's good, and sees his bro-
 " ther have need, and shuts up his bowels of
 " compassion from him, how dwells the love of
 " GOD in him?" "My little children," adds the Apostle, "let us not love in word, neither
 " in tongue, but in deed, and in truth. And
 " hereby we know that we are of the truth,
 " and shall assure our hearts before him (p) :"
 " That is, says the great Mr *Howe* upon the
 " place, (q) this shall demonstrate to us that we
 " are the children of the truth, begotten by it,
 " *James* i. 18. when we resemble it, have the
 " correspondent impress of the gospel, (that
 " great representation of the love of GOD) up-
 " on us. So shall our hearts be quieted, and
 " well satisfied concerning our states towards
 " GOD." It is a good sign upon us that we
 are Christians indeed, if we love as Christians,
 and are ready to contribute, from a principle of
 love, all that lies in our power to the promo-
 tion of our mutual welfare in the relief of one
 anothers burdens, and in the supply of one
 anothers necessities. As the first in the enume-
 ration of the fruits of the Spirit we find Love;
 and what wonder, since it has so near a rela-
 tion to, and indeed is the parent of many at
 least

(p) 1 John iii. 19.

(q) See his Paraphrase on the passage in what are called Mr *Pool's Annotations*.

least of the rest? " But the fruit of the Spirit, says the Apostle, is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance (*r*). " Are we willing to serve one another by love? Is it our study, our desire, our delight, to extend blessing to all around us, and especially to the saints and servants of JESUS CHRIST? Then indeed we have a bright evidence that we are the children of GOD, and that we are the living likenesses of Him whose name and nature is Love (*s*). Our divine temper ascertains our divine birth; and the love that penetrates and possesses our hearts, shows that we are the sons of GOD, and the Called according to his purpose. Love to one another shows that we are not wolves and tigers, but the sheep of CHRIST's fold; and tho' there are other proofs that are necessary to evince our real christianity, and our interest in its inestimable blessings, yet this evidence is to shine in concert with them; and may not I say, next to the love of GOD, is brightest and superior in the train, that we by love serve one another? Hatred and malice are from beneath; they are the progeny and picture of hell itself: but love and mercy are from above, and show that we have the stamp and seal of GOD upon us, that distinguish and declare us to be his people, those whom he has formed for himself, and that shall be owned and blessed as his both here and hereafter. At least, unless we by love serve one another,

D 2

(*r*) Gal. v. 22, 23.(*s*) 1 John iv. 16.

other, we have great reason to conclude that we are not the true saints, and followers of the Lamb but that we are still in the gall of bitterness and the bonds of iniquity: whereas, when we can truly say that we by love serve one another, we have a good ground of hope that we are CHRIST'S, as we are like CHRIST, and are walking as he also walked. By this, and the other lustres of sanctification, we show that we are in a state of acceptance with GOD, and on the road to eternal glory. Once more,

Fifthly, and lastly, Another argument to excite Christians to serve one another by love, may be taken from the consideration that we are hereby preparing for and anticipating heaven. What is heaven, but a region of love? GOD is love; CHRIST is love; the HOLY SPIRIT is love; and the innumerable company of Angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect, are all spirits of love. In heaven there is concord without the least jar, amity without the least contention, and peace without the least interruption for ever and ever. The celestial Paradise is the very element of love. Love is the very air, the glory, the happiness of the place. At the glorious mansions on high we hope ere long to arrive, and in them to enjoy our eternal home, let us then be making ready for them, by cultivating and promoting that temper that reigns through all the myriads and millions of happy spirits residing there, and which will make us fit companions with

with them in their holiness and joys. Let our whole life be a life of education for heaven; being assured, that by how much the more we feel and possess of the spirit of heaven, by so much the more we are made "meet for the inheritance among the saints in light *". Show me the man that loves G O D, and that loves his brother, and I will show you a man that is already robed as a King and Priest to G O D, even the Father, and that is qualified in disposition for the celestial world, though he may for a while be detained here on earth, to shine in those beauties of holiness among men, which in their immaculate and consummate glories constitute the perfection and felicity of heaven. Death brings the saint who loves G O D and loves his brother to the regions, and the company to which he is already adapted and formed; and when darkness resigns to day, mortality to life, faith to vision, hope to enjoyment, and patience to possession, love shall reign and triumph in unbounded extent, and everlasting glory.

Having finished the doctrinal part of my subject, what remains is some Improvement and Application of what has been said. And,

1st, How truly lamentable is it that the churches that name the name of CHRIST are so deplorably defective in this great duty of "serving one another by love?" We hear this love largely discoursed on, and inculcated in the

* Col. i. 12]

the scriptures, and we see much of this love held forth to our view in the examples recorded in the holy oracles ; but, alas ! how little of it is to be found among the churches of JESUS CHRIST ? nay, might it not be too truly added, how much of the contrary spirit of envy and contention is oftentimes visible and prevalent among christian societies, who should walk together in love, and make it their study and ambition " by love to serve one another ? How " is the gold become dim ! How is the fine " gold changed ! " What briers and thorns, what roots of bitterness spring up among the congregations of such as are by profession the saints of GOD, and the followers of the LAMB ! How awfully is the glory departed from the temples of the living GOD ? and as to some of them, such have been the furious heats and animosities that have prevailed there, they have seemed rather to have been usurped by Satan, and filled with his infernal smoke and fires, than to have been the dwellings of the GOD of peace, and the regions of that pure, serene, vital, and refreshing light, which comes down from the Father of lights, and wherever it is found bears the lively and demonstrative tokens of his presence and glory. " Spirit of grace and holiness, descend upon the churches of JESUS CHRIST, (churches that profess his name, that should reflect his image, and shew forth his praise) and by a plentiful effusion of thy sacred and benign influences extinguish all the " unhal-

“ unhallowed flames of discord and variance;
 “ of wrath and envy, and kindle by thine all-
 “ powerful breath the flames of a pure and di-
 “ vine love in all the assemblies of mount *Zion*;
 “ that they, being here on earth lovely in the
 “ sight of God, glorious in the eyes of men, and
 “ happy in communion with one another, may
 “ resemble the blessed and harmonious society
 “ of holy angels, and the spirits of just men
 “ made perfect above, and be made meet for the
 “ eternal vision and enjoyment of the God of
 “ love,” “ in whose presence there is fulness of
 “ joy, and at whose right hand are pleasures for
 “ evermore (t)”. O that the time, the set time
 to favour *Zion* was come! when, when shall
 it be that “ instead of the thorn shall come
 “ up the fir-tree, and instead of the brier shall
 “ come up the myrtle-tree, to be to the LORD for
 “ a name, and for an everlasting sign that shall
 “ not be cut off (u)”? ”

2dly, and lastly, Let us be excited from
 what has been said to an higher value, and a
 more diligent observance of this most amiable
 and essential duty, “ the serving one another by
 “ love. To love God with all our hearts, and
 “ with all our souls, and with all our minds,
 “ and with all our strength, and to love our
 “ neighbours as ourselves (x), “ is the sum and
 substance of Christian duty. And the Apostle
 tells us, that we are to “ owe no man any thing,
 but

(t) Psal. xvi. 11.

(u) Isa. lv. 13,

(x) Mark xii. 30, 31.

"but to love one another; for he that loves
 "another hath fulfilled the law (y)." And again,
 "For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even
 "in this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as
 "thyself (z)." In mutual prayers then for
 each other, in mutual assistance to each other,
 in mutual condescension, and kind offices to
 one another, (I speak to the Minister and
 Church of CHRIST in this place, now en-
 tering into the most sacred bonds) spend the
 days of your mutual fellowship here on earth.
 Let doing good to one another be your design
 and study, your meat and drink; and let the
 church and world be irradiated by your exam-
 ple, and blessed by your love. Henceforward
 consider this duty of "serving one another by
 love," as a most important and indispensable
 duty; and accordingly watch against every
 thing that may have the least tendency to in-
 terrupt you in the practice of it, and parti-
 cularly guard against pride, anger, froward-
 ness, or any other ill passions or dispositions
 that, like malignant vapours, may damp and
 restrain the ardors and exercises of reciprocal
 love. And above all, be frequent and impor-
 tunate at the mercy-seat, that the dew of this
 grace, of this blessing both to yourselves and
 others, may richly descend upon you. God is
 love; and as he is love himself, so he delights
 in his own image, and is ready upon our re-
 quests to him in the name of his Son to com-
 municate of his blessings, and make us parta-
 kers

(y) Rom. xiii. 8;

(z) Gal. v. 14.

kers of a divine nature by transforming us into love. O then, be often and earnestly looking up to "the Father of lights, from whom comes "every good and perfect gift," that he would shed down this beam of his glory upon you, love to himself, and love to one another!

I shall close with that animated prayer of the Apostle*, "And the LORD make you to increase and abound in love towards one another:" there let the flame be first kindled, and first felt; "and towards all men"; and thence let your love diffuse itself, as rays streaming from a central sun, to all mankind; "even "as we do towards you, to the end he may "establish your hearts unblameable in holiness "before God even our Father;" that in this manner, and by these means, your hearts may be established, and may be found to be possessed of a true and genuine, and consequently acceptable holiness in the sight of the great Father of all; "at the coming of our Lord JESUS CHRIST with all his saints," in that illustrious day when JESUS CHRIST shall come from heaven, and appear with all his glorious retinue of saints, all of them made perfect in love, and in all the other immaculate beauties of holiness, among whom you will be admitted to join, as the qualified associates and joyful partners in the triumphs of that blessed season, and the consequent glories and blessedness of his eternal kingdom. *Amen, and Amen!*

* 1 Thess. iii. 12, 13.



A V E R S I O N of
The CXXXIII^d P S A L M,
Adapted to the foregoing DISCOURSE.

I.

W H E R E brethren dwell in mutual love,
And the divine affection prove
In all they do, in all they say,
How high the stream of blessing flows,
In all their hearts what transport glows,
How bright the dawn of heav'nly day!

II.

'Tis like the precious ointment shed
On *Aaron's* venerable head,
That to his rich embroid'ry ran :
Round the full fragrancy extends,
While the exub'rant stream descends,
And consecrates the godlike man !

III.

'Tis like the dews, whose countless drops
On *Hermon's* or on *Zion's* tops
In lenient show'rs of blessing fall,

Where

Where holy love joins hearts and hands
There GOD eternal life commands,
And life eternal hears his call.

IV.

Thou GOD of everlasting love
Send down thy Spirit from above,
And pour the copious blifs around!
Then shall the churches of our LORD
In pious amity accord,
And with heav'ns orient rays be crown'd.

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